

A linguistic kaleidoscope of the Malay letter

The case of the eighteenth century official letters from the Sultanate of Buton

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ABSTRACT¹

The Malay letters make up the largest category of documents among the Malay manuscripts preserved at Leiden University Library, the Netherlands. The corpus represents the scope of the territories under Dutch East Indies authority during the colonial era. In fact, they are authentic documents which denote not only political contact between the local kingdoms in the Archipelago (Nusantara) with the Dutch East Indies government in Batavia during colonial times but also constitute an important source for the study of the historical development of the Malay language. This essay looks at the language characters of such letters which came from the court of Buton in Southeast Sulawesi. It aims to sketch the linguistic variety of the classical Malay language represented in its eighteenth century letter-writing tradition. Having specific diction and features that confirm local influences, the language of the letters shows distinctiveness in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax.

KEYWORDS

Classical Malay letters, Malay letter-writing tradition, eighteenth-century Malay language, Malay language variety, colonial times, Sultan Muhyiuddin Abdul Gafur, Buton, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

The classical Malay letters, both by the local rulers and ordinary people, constitute an important source for the study of the historical development of the Malay language. These letters are also an important source for the study of the political, diplomatic, and economic history of the Malay world (Gallop 1992: 1). Coming from various parts of the Archipelago (Nusantara), and written in a *lingua franca* Malay, which was influenced by different local dialects as well as foreign languages, the letters, in fact, reflect the evolution of the Malay language over a period of centuries.

The letter-writing tradition has been known in the Malay world since the Malaka and Aceh supremacy in the sixteenth century. It is believed to have transmitted from Persia and the Arab world. Gallop (1994: 14) mentions that a *kitab terasul* (the letter-writing guide book in Malay) SOAS MS 25032, possibly originating from the northern part of Borneo, employed parables including quotations from Persian which clearly derived from a Persian model. However, the written sources about the letter-writing guides were published just close to the end of eighteenth century,² while their printed copies appeared in the nineteenth century.³

This essay examines official letters from the court of Buton legacy in Southeast Sulawesi. Written in the Malay language using the Jawi script (the Arabic script adopted for the Malay language), most of such letters could be preserved until now, the majority of which are stored in Baubau, the capital of Buton, by Abdul Mulku Zahari's family (Ikram et al. 2002), while a few others are held in the Netherlands (Wieringa 1998).

So far, there have been a number of studies of the Butonese letters (see Pudjiastuti 2004; Mu'jizah 2004; Suryadi 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2010a), since pioneered by W.G. Shellabear (1898) who introduced a letter of a Butonese *kapitan laut* (*kapitalao* 'the seaguard commander') dated around 1667. This essay investigates the lexical and phraseological aspects of such Butonese letters, which suffer from as lack of attention in previous studies. It looks at five Butonese letters written in the last decades of the eighteenth century (1788-1798) on behalf of the 26th Butonese king (*sultan*) Muhyiuddin Abdul Gafur. He ruled the Sultanate of Buton between 1791 and 1799. The letters are Cod. Or. 2240-Ia (15), Cod. Or. 2240-Ia (24), Cod. Or. 2240-Ia (38), Cod. Or. 2240-Ia (44), and Cod. Or. 2240-II (3) of the Leiden University Library collections (Wieringa 1998: 303-15; see Table 1). I also provide the transliteration of the letters in the Roman script. It is intended to give a clearer impression about

² See for example *kitab terasul* (Cod.Or. 1764) of the Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden (UBL) collection, which was possibly written at the end of the eighteenth century, arranged by "the scribe Abdul Kadir, son of the mosque reader Dendang, a native of Semarang, now residing in Palembang and employed as a scribe by Tuan Haji Abdul Hamid" (Gallop 1994: 13).

³ See, for instance, the 1871 edition of *kitab terasul* by an anonymous author entitled *Bahwa inilah peraturan membuat surat kiriman kepada raja² dan ibu bapa dan kepada sahabat handai dan surat perjanjian dan aturan membuat kira² dan hari bulan* (Singapore: Hj. Muhammad Nuh) (Anonymous 1871).

their contents to the current readers. By looking into the language characters of such eighteenth century Malay official letters from the court of Buton, this essay aims to sketch the linguistic variety of the classical Malay language represented in its eighteenth century letter-writing tradition. In order to comprehend the contents of these letters, it is important, however, to describe briefly their historical context.

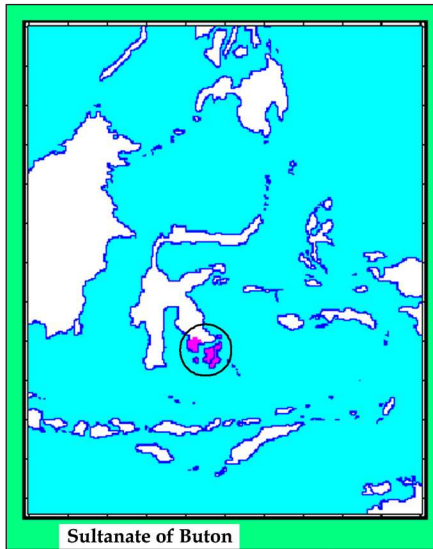
THE SULTANATE OF BUTON: A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

In the past, Buton⁴ (or Butun or Wolio) was a sovereign archipelagic local kingdom in eastern Indonesia. The kingdom's antecedent is said to have been established in the fourteenth century which, according to local sources, was founded by a group of immigrants from Johore and Sumatra, possibly from Minangkabau, led by four persons called *mia patamiana* (four persons): Sipajonga, Simalui, Sitamananjo, and Sijawanghati. The first ruler of the kingdom was a queen named Wa Khaa Khaa (Abidin 1968; Yunus 1995a: 17). In the sixteenth century, Islam came to the Buton islands, which then strongly influenced the kingdom. The sixth king named Lakiloponto converted to Islam in 1538, making him the first Butonese ruler who was called "sultan" with his Islamic noble name "Sultan Murhum" (Zuhdi, Ohorella, and Said D. 1996: 11; P. Schoorl 2003: 15).

The territory of the Sultanate of Buton includes dozens of groups of islands in Southeast Sulawesi, in the western bank of the Banda Sea, situated between 121.40° and 124.50° South latitude and between 4.20 and 6.20 East longitude (see Map 1). It consisted of the main Island of Buton (where the capital of the Sultanate, Baubau, was situated), Muna Island (or Woena or Pancano), Kabaena, the smaller islands scattered among those three islands (the islands of Tiworo, Tikola, Tobeya Besar and Tobeya Kecil, Makassar or Liwotu, Kadatua or Kadatowang, Masiring, Bata Oga, Siompu, Talaga Besar and Talaga Kecil), the Tukang Besi Islands (Wangi-wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia, and Binongko islands), Wowoni, and the smaller surrounding islands. The Sultanate of Buton's territory also included the regions of Poleang and Rumbia which were situated in the Southeast Sulawesi Peninsula (Zuhdi, Ohorella, and Said D. 1996: 5; Yunus 1995a: 22).⁵

⁴ Today Buton is an island that belongs to Indonesia's Southeast Sulawesi Province with the main city of Baubau. Inhabited by the majority of Butonese and the minorities of the Buginese, the Chinese, the Javanese, and the Balinese, the Island of Buton is the biggest asphalt producer in the world with reserve deposit for about 150 years, which has been explored since the Dutch colonial era (see Bothé 1928).

⁵ For more on classical records about the Sultanate of Buton, see Ligvoet (1878); Kielstra (1908); Elbert et al. (1911, 1912); Broersma (1930); Van den Berg (1937, 1939).



Map 1. The Sultanate of Buton (<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/seasia/xbuton.html>).

The traditional Butonese society was divided into four social stratas: the first and highest class was called the *kaomu*, that is, the sultans and their relatives and descendants that could be identified from their first name *La Ode* for men and *Wa Ode* for women. (Such first names remain to be used until the present). The second group was the *walaka*, namely, those who were descended on the father's line from the founders of Sultanate of Buton (*mia patamiana*). The *kaomu* kept the executive and the *walaka* held the legislature (Fontijne 1949). The *walaka* and the *kaomu* were closely related with each other in political and social affairs, and according to the traditional Butonese custom the *kaomu* men could marry the *walaka* women. The third group was called *papara*, that is, the commoners. Mostly living in the villages, they were also called “*adat slave*” whose lives were less independent but were allowed to keep particular positions in the village administration. The fourth group was called *batua* or *babatua* (slaves). They were the lowest class and fully depended permanently on their owners/masters. They could be sold or presented as gifts, as was often mentioned in the closing paragraphs of the Butonese letters under investigation (see Section Transliteration).⁶ Furthermore, there were two in-between groups (*lapisan antara*) called *analalaki* and *limbo*, namely, those who had been demoted from the *kaomu* or the *walaka* due to misbehaving or failing to carry out their obligations as members of the noble classes (P. Schoorl 2003: 213-214).

As the *kaomu* and the *walaka* were the nobility of the Butonese traditional society, they controlled and ruled the kingdom. The Sultanate itself had its

⁶ The Dutch reports from the VOC era mentioned that slaves were one of the main commodity trades in Buton. Thus, for example, the VOC Governor-General Jan Pieterzoon Coen stated this subject in his report after he visited Buton in 1614 (P. Schoorl 2003). In *Letter C* (line 20) it was written *orang yang terjual*, which means ‘the slave’. For more about the slave trade in Buton, see P. Schoorl (2003: 104-107, 111-119). On the slavery in the colonial Dutch East Indies, see Reid (1983); Baay (2015).

own traditional political system by designating power sharing between the *kaomu* and the *walaka*. Some key political positions were occupied by the *kaomu* families and others were reserved for their *walaka* counterparts. This system was designed to minimize political conflicts among the elites and to ensure that the succession process of the throne in the kingdom ran peacefully.

The Sultanate's territory was divided into three categories: the *wolio*, the *kadie*, and the *barata*. *Wolio* was the palace area situated in the Sultanate capital of Baubau, which was called Keraton Wolio (the Court of Wolio). Only the *kaomu* and the *walaka* families were allowed to reside in this area.⁷ Later the *wolio* area also included the surrounding regions close to the palace, which were called *Surawolio* and *Baadia*. The *kadie* was area outside *Wolio*, *Surowolio*, and *Baadia*. There were some 72 *kadie* spread all over the kingdom which were inhabited by the *papara* ordinaries. The *barata*⁸ was a region which had its own autonomy, but politically it was under the authority of the Sultanate of Buton (Yunus 1995a: v).

The Sultan, the highest ruler, resided in the Wolio palace. Selected from the *kaomu*, he was the master of the highest-ranking circle of the rulers (*pangka*). Occupied by personages from the *kaomu* and the *walaka* only, the *pangka* consisted of some super bodies, which are *Sapati* (reserved for the *kaomu*); *Kenepulu* (for the *kaomu*); *Lakina Surowolio* (for the *kaomu*); *Lakina Baadia* (for the *kaomu*); two *Kopitalao* (*Kapitan laut* - for the *kaomu*): *Kapitalao Sukanayo* and *Matanayo* (for the *kaomu*),⁹ two *Bonto Ogena* (*menteri besar* 'great-minister'), namely, *Bonto Ogena Sukanayo* and *Matanayo* (for the *walaka*). The executive *pangka* was monitored by a legislative body called *Sarana Wolio*. Members of *Sarana Wolio* consisted of all *bobatos* (occupied by the *kaomu*) and *bontos* (occupied by the *walaka*).¹⁰

Apart from *pangka*, there were some other distinctive bodies that

⁷ Today we still can see the ruins of the palace, which are surrounded by a fort whose are ranges around three kilometers squares. It is one of a tangible heritage sites and has become a prominent tourist destination on Buton Island. See Astuti et al. (n.d.).

⁸ There were four *barata* estates: 1) Barata Muna in the eastern coast of Muna Island, 2) Barata Tiworo in Tiworo Island, 3) Barata Kalingsusu (or Kalincusu) situated in the eastern coast of Buton Island, and 4) Barata Kaledupa in Kaledupa Island (Yunus 1995a: 22). The *barata* rulers (*lakina barata*) were elected from the *kaomu*. In war situation, the *baratas* had to support the Sultanate of Buton to protect its sovereign regions from enemies' attack (P. Schoorl 2003: 92).

⁹ See the *Kapiten Laut* term in *Letter B* (Line 10). *Matanayo* literally means 'from the direction of sunrise' (the western part of the Sultanate of Buton's territory), and *sukanayo* literally means 'go to the direction of sunset' (the eastern part of the Sultanate of Buton's territory) (Zuhdi, Oforella, and Said D. 1996: 28; P. Schoorl 2003: 82).

¹⁰ Each *bobato* and *bonto* deserve a tract of land in the *kadie* areas under their supervision. In earlier times, there were 30 *bonto* and 40 *bobato*, but later the number increased along with the increasing numbers of *kadie*. According to Manarfa (1948: 8), there were 57 *bobato* in all regions of the Sultanate of Buton, nine of which were called *siolipuna*, which means nine smaller sovereignties. Ruled by small kings, they became the Sultanate of Buton's innate allies (*sekutu asli*) in war and peace (see also P. Schoorl 2003: 83). In Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters under analysis, the *bobato* term is often mentioned: see *Letter B* line 2; *Letter C* line 2 and 16; *Letter D* line 1 and 7; and *Letter E* line 2.

administratively functioned to help the Sultan to rule the kingdom, which were *Bonto Inunca*: the palace staff (reserved for the *walaka*),¹¹ and *Bontona Lencina Kanjawari*, that is, the special staff who assisted the Sultan in executing special duties, including *Bonto Isana* (reserved for the *walaka*). Other functions are *Jurubasa* or *Jurubahasa* (reserved for the *walaka*),¹² *Sabandara* or *Syahbandar*,¹³ who functioned as the high authority of the harbour (reserved for the *kaomu*), *Talambo*, who assisted *Bonto Ogena* to convey important information and instructions from the Sultan, and *pangalasan*,¹⁴ who assisted *Bonto Ogena* to collect taxes (*weti*).¹⁵

As mentioned above, Islam was first accepted by the Butonese nobilities in the first half of the sixteenth century. They shared their religious knowledge with the commoners, keeping such ordinary people dependent upon them. Sufism (the inner and mystical dimension of Islam) exists among the Butonese, especially among the noble families. The Sufis believe that they acquire special inner knowledge directly from Allah. They believe that meditation may result in a vision of God. *Tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) known as *Martabat Tujuh* (the theory of seven stages) has been known in the Sultanate of Buton since at least the seventeenth century, during the reign of Sultan Dayanu Ihsanuddin. However, the earliest written text referring to it was dated from the mid-nineteenth century, during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Idrus Kaimuddin (1824-1851). The text is an explanation of the concept of *wahdah al wujud* (the unity of being) formulated by Ibn 'Arabi. It describes how the existence of God can be felt through seven levels of existence. The main source of the theory is the book *Al-Tuhfah al-Mursalah ila Ruh al-Nabi* (The gift addressed to the spirit of the Prophet) written by Muhammad ibn Fadlullah al Burhanpuri, who lived in the second half of the sixteenth century.

¹¹ The elements of *Bonto Inunca* are *Bontona Dete*, *Bontona Katapi*, *Bontona Waberongalu*, *Bontona Kalau*, *Bontona Wajo*, *Bontona Sumbamarusu*, *Bontona Litao*, *Bontona Tanailandu*, *Bontona Galampa*, and two *Bontona Gampikaro* (*Sukanayo* and *Matanayo*). Their duty was to protect the Sultan and his palace, as well as to preserve the custom (*adat*).

¹² *Jurubasa* or *Jurubahasa* (interpreter) was responsible to the *syahbandar* (P. Schoorl 2003: 126). Apparently, this post was very important due to the fact that it was frequently mentioned in Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters: see *Letter B* lines 5, 7, 24, and 27; *Letter C* lines 11 and 28; *Letter D* lines 5, 7, and 12; *Letter E* line 6. One of the important interpreters (*jurubasa*) during the reign of Sultan Muhyiuddin was named Inci Ali (see *Letter B* line 5).

¹³ According to Manarfa (1948: 7), the *kapita* and the *sabandara* (*syahbandar*) officers were part of *pangka*, while Van den Berg (1939) and Zahari (1977) mention that these posts were placed outside *pangka*. A *syahbandar* supervised 20-40 *jurubahasa* (P. Schoorl 2003: 126). This post was mentioned in *Letter D* line 5 and *Letter E* line 20. The famous *syahbandar* during the reign of Sultan Muhyiuddin was someone named Raja Kamilanta (see *Letter B* lines 6 and 8).

¹⁴ *Pangalasan* (or *pengalasa* according to Van den Berg 1939: 470) was a spokesman in the *kadie* estate level. This post could be held by proper persons other than the *kaomu* and the *walaka*. It was mentioned in *Letter B* lines 7 and 11; *Letter C* line 11; *Letter D* lines 5 and 7, and *Letter E* line 6.

¹⁵ Here I just describe the major functions of the Sultanate of Buton's administration system. I focus mostly on the functions frequently mentioned in Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters. For more information about the traditional administration system of the Sultanate of Buton, see Yunus (1995a: 31-37); Zuhdi, Ohorella, and Said D. (1996: 26-61); J.W. Schoorl (1986); P. Schoorl (2003: especially Chapter 3, 73-134); Ligvoet (1878); Elbert et al. (1911: 175-187); Van den Berg (1939: 469-528).

Such religious concept of Islam strongly influenced the political practices and social life in the Sultanate of Buton (Yunus 1995b). However, as a result of lingering Hinduism that had been in existence in Buton before the coming of Islam, the Butonese still believe in reincarnation (J.W. Schoorl 1985).

Historically, the kingdom of Buton was one of Dutch close allies since the VOC era. The alliance between them was declared by the fourth Butonese sultan, Sultan Dayanu Ihsanuddin (La Elangi), and the VOC representative, Captain Apolonius Scotte, in 1613. Though the relationship fluctuated, as reflected in the content of the letters under investigation, the alliance was long lasting until the end of Dutch colonization in Indonesia.¹⁶ Buton sought an alliance with the Dutch, which was strong militarily, in order to protect its sovereignty that was always threatened by its neighbour kingdoms, namely, Makassar and Ternate (Zuhdi 2010). Both kingdoms competed to control the eastern part of the Archipelago by invading the surrounding smaller local kingdoms, including Buton. Makassar and Ternate also confronted with the Dutch to control sea trade in the region. The Sultanate of Buton remained independent until the death of its last sultan, La Ode Falihi, in 1960. In 1956, he was visited by the first Indonesian President, Soekarno, in Baubau. The president asked the Sultan to intergrate his kingdom into the Republic of Indonesia. The Sultan fulfilled Soekarno's request. The integration, however, caused the Butonese nobility to lose their political authorities (P. Schoorl 2003: 212).

SULTAN MUHYIUDDIN ABDUL GAFUR'S LETTERS

Table 1 informs us of the date record of Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters under investigation: the former one is *Letter A* dated 22 Muharram 1203 A.H. (= 23 October 1788) and the latter one is *Letter E* dated 20 Rabiulakhir 1213 (= 1 October 1798). These letters are held in Leiden University Library under "Rijks-Instelling" collections part three (1878).¹⁷

¹⁶ The deep influence of Dutch power in Butonese sultanate was even recorded through music: the musical drums of the Butonese court that still exists currently was mimicked from the sixteenth century musical drums of the VOC military (Kaudern 1927; Brenner 2014).

¹⁷ Citing Wieringa (1998: 283), the historical account of this collection is as follows: "The 'Government Training College for Indian Civil Servants' (Rijks-Instelling tot Opleiding van Indische Ambtenaren) was founded in Leiden in 1864. In 1877 it was replaced in Leiden by a municipal institution which would continue to exist until 1891. The manuscript collection of the 'Rijks-Instelling' was transferred at several instances between 1871 and 1878 to the Library of Leiden University (Cod. Or. 1953-2055 [except Cod. Or 1959, 2019 and 2025]) 2199, 2233 and 2229-2268".

Letter	MSS	Colofon (A.H.)	Conversion (A.D.)	Date of delivery to Batavia
Letter A	Cod.Or.2242-II (3)	22 Muharram 1203	23 October 1788	17 October 1792
Letter B	Cod.Or.2240-Ia (15)	22 Muharram 1206	21 September 1791	9 October 1792
Letter C	Cod.Or.2242-Ia (24)	8 Rabiulawal 1207	24 October 1792	31 October 1794
Letter D	Cod.Or.2242-Ia (38)	28 Rabiulakhir 1211	31 October 1796	1 November 1796 [!]
Letter E	Cod.Or.2242-Ia (44)	20 Rabiulakhir 1213	1 October 1798	24 September 1799

Table 1. The date record of Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters.

Some scholarly works mention that Sultan Muhyiuddin ruled between 1791 and 1799 (Ligvoet 1878: 86; Zahari 1977, III: 13; Yunus 1995a: 115, 152; Harkantiningasih and Riyanto 1996: 31), whereas Zuhdi, Ohorella, and Said D. (1996: Lampiran 3b) mention that Muhyiuddin reigned between 1798 and 1803. This account, however, is still debatable, considering the colophon of *Letter A*, which was dated 1788. This suggests that before 1791 Muhyiuddin (La Kopuru) most likely had held the authority to send official letters which represented the Sultanate of Buton on behalf of himself, and used his own seal. This fact indicates that he already had power (as Sultan?) in the court of Wolio at least since 1788. It is the historians' task to discuss this matter further. Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters were written during the administrations of two Dutch East Indies' "Heer Gurnadur" (Governor General), namely, Willem Arnold Alting (1780-1796) and his successor, Petrus Gerardus van Overstraten (1796-1801) (see Stapel 1941: 68-71).

TRANSLITERATION

Notes on the transliteration: Similar to many sixteenth to nineteenth century Malay letters, Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters were poor with punctuation because they were written in the script of *Arab gundul* (Malay-adopted Arabic script or Jawi script without punctuation marks). In their Roman transliteration provided here, I added punctuation and reorganized the paragraphs, so their contents can be comprehended more clearly by current readers.

Parts of the transliteration written in bold characters are authentically replicated from their Jawi script versions. The Arabic terms were italicized in the transliteration, which was done by the transliterator. The numbers put in brackets refer to the line numbers in their original Jawi manuscripts. The writing of reduplicated words using numeral 2 in the subscript was also adjusted from their original Jawi versions. Mark < > indicates dittography and mark { } indicates haplography.

*Letter A: Cod.Or. 2242- II (3)**Qauluhu al-haqq,*

Bahwa inilah warkat *al-mahbat* yang terbit daripada *fuad al-ikhlas min-arrafiq* daripada paduka anakanda Sri Sultan Muhyiuddin [1] yang mempunyai tahta Kerajaan Balad Al-Buton, natiasa¹⁸ melayangkan kertas sekeping, dalamnya tabi banyak₂ akan tanda hormat yang amat [2] takzim dan *takrim*, datang kiranya mendapatkan *wahid* darjah Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni **Tuan He{e}r¹⁹ Gurnadur Jenderal** [3] di Betawi yang amat kuasa serta perintah atas keliling alam Tanah Jawah, dengan berlanjut usia umur zamannya dengan hidup yang sempurna [4] sampai ada kiranya berkekalan di atas martabat kebesaran dan kemuliaan di dalam dunia ini jua adanya [5].

Waba'dahu kemudian daripada itu adalah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Raja Buton akan hal menunjukkan selamat [6] *al-mubarak* akan tanda berkasih-kasihan dan berharap-harapan kepada Paduka Ayahandah **Tuan Heer Gurnadur** [7] dari karena kompeni dengan Buton sentiasa berpandang-pandangan dan berkunjungkunjungan pada antara kedua pihak [8] kita: Kompeni dengan Buton. Apabila ada suatu hal yang memeri kecederaan, janganlah kiranya hal menengar khabar [9] pada orang lain melainkan sebole₂ memegang *waad* perjanjian yang telah sudah biasa diperlakukan segala orang [10] tuah₂ Kompeni dengan Buton pada zaman yang *mutaawal*in hingga pada masa yang *mutaakhir*in, jangan sekali₂ [11] berubah dan *tagayyur* jua adanya.

Suatu pun tiada tanda alamat *al-hayat* daripada akhir *al-satarnya* [12] hanya seorang buda{k} laki-laki akan dipesertakan dengan tabi banyak₂. Demikianlah adanya.

Tersurat di dalam Kerajaan Sri Sultan Raja Buton pada dua likur hari bulan Muharram pada hari Isnin di dalam Hijrat al-Nabi *Sal-alam*²⁰ seribu dua ratus tiga pada tahun H²¹ [13].

*Letter B: Cod.Or. 2240-Ia (15)**Qauluhu al-haqq wa-kalamuhu al-sidqi,*

Bahwa ini warkat *al-akram* pada menyatakan tabi banyak₂ akan tanda hidmat Yang Maha Mulia di dalam kandungan kertas sekeping, menunjukkan kasih mesrah yang sedia adanya daripada Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Muhyiuddin [1] Raja Buton, yang telah mufakat baharu beserta dengan segala wazir orang besar₂nya dan menteri₂nya serta sekalian bobato di dalam daerah Negeri Buton, barang disampaikan *Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala* kiranya datang mendapatkan ke

¹⁸ Spelled n-t-y-s. Apparently, this means *sentiasa* ('always') that appears in other lines of the subsequent letters. The word *sentiasa* is still used until nowadays in Malaysia. See Iskandar (1984: 1080).

¹⁹ Spelled h-y-r, meaning the Dutch word *heer* ('sir' in English or '*tuan*' in Malay). Henceforth it will be transliterated as "*heer*".

²⁰ Short form of *Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam* (My God bless and preserve Him [Prophet Muhamad]). See these words in colophon of subsequent letters.

²¹ 22 Muharram 1203 H. = 23 October 1788.

bawah hadirat Paduka Ayahandah [2] Kompeni **Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal** dan Direktur yang amat kuasa perintahnya pada selebar Tanah Jawah beserta dengan segala Tuan₂ Raden van India di dalam kota intan Betawi Bandar yang *kamaliyah*.

Syahdan [3] yang telah beroleh limpah pertolongan Kompeni tatkala ia *kharij* keluar di Negeri Walandah pada zaman awal yang *mutaqaddimin* hingga pada masa yang *mutaakhirin*, istimewa pula barang dilanjutkan usia umur zamannya dengan hidup yang sempurna di dalam dunia ini [4].

Waba'dahu kemudian daripada itu adalah Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya peri menyuruhkan Alperes²² Ahmad dan seorang juru bahasa Inci Ali namanya serta teman₂nya, menumpang pada dua buah perahu padewakang,²³ akan [5] menyampaikan *nabazah* serta supaya maklum dan mafhum kiranya Paduka Dipertuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India²⁴ di Betawi pada hal menyuruh utusannya yaitu Syahbandar Raja Kamilanta²⁵ dan dua orang [6] menteri serta empat orang pengalasan dan dua orang juru bahasa pada enam buah perahu pergi²⁶ di Mangkasar akan membaiki dan menetapi bunyi *waad* perjanjian yang lama daripada zaman yang dahulu sampai sekarang dimuliakan kepada dua [7] pihak kita, Kompeni dengan Buton, tiada *munkoti*q dan *munfasal* serta tegahnya seperti adanya dahulu dan adanya sekarang. **Syahdan** sehingga dunia habis. Sekarang ini Syahbandar Raja Kamilanta yang disuruhnya pergi ke Mangkasar telah [8] sudah ia pulang kembali ke Negeri Buton dengan selamat sempurna, tiada ia mendapat suatu cendera hanya jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan Paduka Yang Dipertuan [9] Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan hal berperangan kami dengan Negeri Kalincusu sekarang ini. Maharaja Sapati dan Kapiten Laut telah sudah dimenangkan Allah, dikalahkannya Negeri Kalincusu jua adanya [10].

Syahdan adapun Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya serta ia melihat sudah kalah Negeri Kalincusu, lalu ia menyuruh Raja K-n-d-w-r-h²⁷ dan Menteri Katapi dan empat orang pangalasan dan seorang juru bahasa serta <teman> [11] teman₂nya pada empat buah perahu yang pergi di Hujung Pandan pada tahun yang lalu hendak memberi maklum kepada Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni di Mangkasar, dipersertakan dengan lasykar seratus kapal yang dibawa<t>nya ke Mangkasar jua adanya [12].

²² Spelled a-l-p-r-y-s (*alperes*), from the Arabic cognate *al-faris*, meaning 'the cavalry' (see also lines 17 and 18). In the sixteenth century Portuguese language it was called *alferes* (see Dicionário 2001: A-F, 14).

²³ *Padewakang* (also spelled *padewakan*) was the biggest craft of the Makassarese trading and war fleet of South Sulawesi. See De Bruyn Kops 1927: 438; see also Wieringa 2005: 59.

²⁴ *Raden van India* means *Raad van Indië*.

²⁵ Spelled k-m-y-l-n-t. Ligvoet (1878: 86) writes "Rad-Kamalanta".

²⁶ In its Jawi script, this word was written as *peragi*. It can be found in other lines of this letter and also in subsequent letters.

²⁷ Raja Kendoroh (?). The philologist La Niampe from Haluoleo University at Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, suggests that in ancient times there was an old monarchy under Buton sovereignty named Kaudoro (personal communication, 30 May 2005). Or it may be read "Kendarih", which refers to the current Kendari, the capital of Southeast Sulawesi. In the letters, we found some words added with consonant *h* in their final syllables.

Seperkara lagi Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi pada hal segala meriam₂ yang dimintanya oleh Kompeni [13] pada tiap₂ tahun di Negeri Buton adanya. Inilah Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya serta dilihatnya dalam surat Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni sudah *ittifaqlah* sekaliannya dimintakannya harga segala meriam₂ ini. Maka dikira₂kannyalah [14] dirinya tiada mendapat harga sebegitu banyak akan membelikan segala meriam₂ yang dimintanya oleh Kompeni pada tiap₂ tahun di Negeri Buton. Jadi, Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya pun dilepaskannyalah segala meriam₂ [15] yang dimintanya oleh Kompeni pada tiap tahun di Negeri Buton, tiada ada perahu yang boleh memuat meriam₂ ini melainkan perahu Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni jua yang boleh [16] memuat segala meriam₂ ini jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya memaklumkan Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni pada hal kami mendapat orang jauh dua orang yang ditangkap oleh orang Seran,²⁸ serta kami [17] melihat rakyat Kompeni, lalu ia Paduka Sri Sultan dengan wazir menteri₂nya dikirimkannya kepada Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni di Betawi, telah sudah dalam tangan suruhan Alperes itu jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi Paduka Sri [18] Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya akan hal memaklumkan Paduka Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi dari hal ada sebuah kici Kompeni empunya perahu datang di Ternate yaitu nama Lutenan Peter [19] H-k-P-r-y-t-r-k-s,²⁹ adalah ia singgah di Buton dari sebab keputusan sekocinya³⁰. Serta ia sampai di Buton, lalu Lutenan itu memberitahu serta minta kepada Paduka Sri Sultan. Demikian perkataan: "Jikalau ada perahu yang boleh menjadi sampai atau [20] ada sekoci di sini, maka seyogiyanya Paduka Sri Sultan barang ada pun izin rodi tolongkan kiranya kepadaku membeli". Maka Paduka Sri Sultan serta menengar demikian perkataan Lutenan itu, lalu diberikannya satu sekoci jua adanya [21].

Seperkara lagi Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan Paduka Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan hal sebuah lagi kici datang dari Serubaya³¹ supaya hendak [22] pergi ke Bandan. Adapun nama orang besarnya Heer Ke{e}s³² namanya. Adalah ia singgah kemari di Buton pada tahun yang lalu, meminta tolong kepada Sri Sultan di Buton dari sebab estirmannya tiadalah mengetahui jalan Terusan Astarag³³ Buton, supaya [23] keluar ia kepada pihak sebelah *masyrik*. Maka Paduka Sri Sultan serta dilihatnya perahu Kompeni dalam kesukaran, lalu ia menyuruh empat orang jurubahasa serta teman₂nya empat puluh orang menumpang pada dua perahu

²⁸ Spelled s-y-r-a-n (*Seran*), which is Seram Island in Southern Moluccas. See also this word in *Letter D* lines 19-20.

²⁹ Possibly the last word is *Frederiks*. The second word is still unclear to me. It can be read *Hak*, *He{c}k*, or *Ho{o}k* – a middle name that seems highly possible for an European.

³⁰ Written *askocinya*.

³¹ Spelled s-r-w-b-y (*Serubaya*).

³² Spelled h-y-r k-y-s. It is clear that the second word should be read *Kees*, one of common *voornamen* (first names) of the Netherlands, such as *Kees van Dijk*, etcetera.

³³ Spelled a-s-t-r-a-q (*astaraq*). It is clear that it derived from Dutch word *straat* (strait).

akan menunjukkan jalan [24] kici Kompeni. Demikianlah adanya.

Seperkara lagi Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan hal bendera Kompeni yang telah sudah dikirimkan [25] dahulu itu sudahlah ia buruk. Mudah-mudahan barang ada kiranya dengan izin rodi oleh Tuan Gunardur Jenderal hendaknya dikirim lagi satu bendera besar yang patut dipasang di atas kota serta dengan payung ubur₂ yang tiga lapis [26] jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi adapun jurubahasa terlalu lelah dan merasai tiada suatu bagian faedahnya, jadilah menyeru dengan sangat permintaanya kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal karena biaya dalamnya satu buah [27] tiga belas Riyal, di situ juga meminta barang satu keteng³⁴ tetapi jangan bertambah atau kurang biaya jua adanya.

Apalah kiranya pada akhir *al-satar* hanya dua lapan orang lasykar, lain dari itu dua orang lasykar akan tanda alamat Gusnadur sendiri jua adanya [28].

Tersurat diatas Tanah Buton, di dalam istanah Kerajaan Sri Sultan Raja Buton, pada dua likur hari bulan Muharram pada hari Isnin di dalam hijrat al-Nabi *Sal-alam* seribu dua ratus enam pada tahun H³⁵.

Note: In the right margin of this letter, there is a marginalia written in relation to the main text, which says: "*Seperkara lagi, oleh Jurutulis yang bahara telah berpesankan kain [2] cita halus sekayu dan sekayu kain kasta jua adanya*". Apparently, this was another request to add to those which had been listed in the closing paragraph of this letter.

³⁴ Spelled k-t-n-g.

³⁵ Dua likur (22) Muharram 1206 H = 21 September 1791.

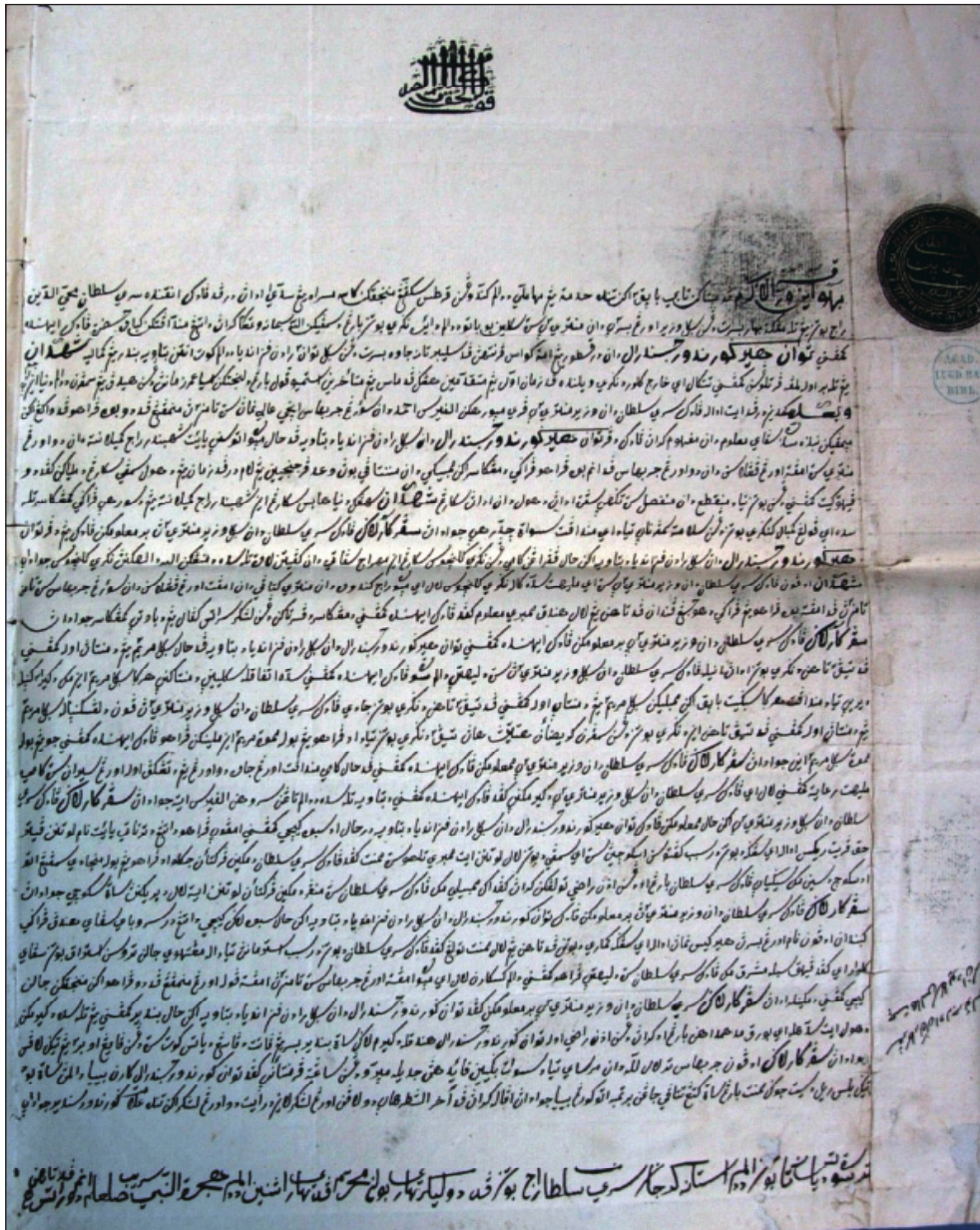


Illustration 1. Letter B: Cod.Or. 2240-1a [15] (Courtesy Leiden University Library).

Letter C: Cod.Or.2240-1a (24)

Qauluhu al-haqq wa-kalamuhu al-sidqi,

Bahwa ini warkat al-ikhlas yang di dalam kandungan kertas sekeping menzahirkan beberapa pengharapkan yang amat setiawan beserta dengan kasih mesrah yang sempurna dermawan daripada Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan kasyiyyuddin Raja Buton [1] berittifaq dengan segala wazir menteri₂nya serta

sekalian bobato di dalam daerah Negeri Buton, barang disampaikan kiranya ke bawah kursi Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni **Heer Gurnadur Jenderal** yang melengkapi kuasa kekerasan Kompeni pada sepanjang Alam Tanah [2] Jawah beserta dengan segala Tuan₂ Raden van India yang mengiringkan dia di dalam kota intan Betawi *Darul Masyhur*.

Syahdan adalah dipohonkan atasnya barang dikekalkan kiranya di atas martabat kebesaran dan kemuliaannya dan serta berlanjut usia umur zamannya dengan [3] hidup yang kesentosaannya di dalam dunia ini, mudah-mudahan kiranya pertambahan tali perdagangan pada antara Kerajaan Kompeni dengan Kerajaan Buton supaya ada kiranya sedia tetap dengan tiada sekali₂ berubah dan bercerai dengan selama-lamanya jua adanya [4].

Waba'dahu kemudian daripada itu dengan sempurna dan sebaik₂ memberi maklum dan mafhum kiranya atas Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni **Heer Gurnadur Jenderal** dan segala Raden van India di Betawi peri hal adapun surat Kompeni yang di dalam tangan [5] Alperes pada tahun dahulu dipesertakan dengan hadiah kirimannya satu payung ubur₂ dengan bendera Kompeni, lagi beberapa rupa kain₂ yang berbagai₂ jenis warna, itupun telah sampailah kemari ke Buton dengan sejahteranya. Akan Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya [6] telah menyambut serta diterima kasih dengan sebagaimana perintah hormat yang sangat kemuliaan Negeri Buton yang telah mesrah biasa selamanya. Maka peri kemudiannya apabila membuka gulungan kertasnya dan serta ia dibaca, amat mengertilah dengan keridaan yang memeri sukacita dalamnya. Istimewa pula [7] maklum kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan peri hal ihwal Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya telah mendapat untung celaka yakni Allah *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* menurunkan bala api kepada Negeri Buton. Adapun rumah [8] Sri Sultan dan sekalian rumah₂ yang lain pada sebelah Negeri Buton pada pihak sehari habislah hangus dimakan api, lagi beberapa gudang senjata negeri Buton seperti senapang dan obor dan pelor yang telah sudah hancur binasa, maka peri demikian jua adanya [9].

Sebermula maklum kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi, adapun Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya telah berhimpun₂ mengira₂kan serta menuntut pada jalan istiadat yang benar betulnya, lalu ia menyuruh Menteri [10] Dete dan Menteri Wajo, serta empat orang pangalasan dan dua orang jurubahasa dengan teman₂nya berkendara{a}n pada dua buah perahu supaya mendapat serta mengunjung ke bawah kursi Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan [11] segala Raden van India di Betawi.

Tambahan lagi serta melayangkan kertas sekeping peri terlalu gelap hari kesusahan dialaminya oleh Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya, kepada pihak mana juga akan manalah permintaanya dan surat₂nya [12] melainkan kepada Kompeni dari karena ibu-bapa kita yang sedia adanya. Maka barang ada kiranya dengan izin kemurahannya oleh Gunardur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi hendaklah kiranya sebole₂ memeri pertolongan seperti senapang dan obor dan pelor [13] barang seratus pucuk. Maka jikalau ada hal kekurangan pada harga yang dibawa utusan itu karena dua puluh lasykar apabila tiada ia cukup, hendaklah kiranya hal manalah dalam surat Kompeni yang dibawa utusan itu pulang ke Buton. Demikian adanya.

Seperkara lagi [14] maklum kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi dari karena tersebut di dalam suratnya supaya hendak memeri peringatan, kami menyuruh utusan besar pergi ke Mangkasar supaya membaharui *waad* perjanjian yang selamanya. Akan peri hal itulah [15] paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya, barang ada tiada sesuatu hal yang melintang dia pada musim angin timur sekarang ini, adalah ia melakukan menyuruh dua orang bobato dan dua orang menteri akan pergi berlayar ke Mangkasar serta bersama₂ dengan Kametir Kompeni jua [16] adanya.

Seperkara lagi maklum kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi kepada masa permulaan angin timur sekarang ini adalah sebuah kapal datang pada matahari hidup, lalu ia bersinggah kemari serta berlabu{h} pada mulut sungai Negeri Buton [17]. Akan hal Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya telah adalah menyuruhkan jurubahasa memeriksai, maka sepatah pun tiada sekali₂ hal mengerti pada bahasa Melayu, hanya perkataan₂ sendirinya jua, yakni gerangan Inggris, terlalu hebat lagi [18] beberapa jenis maslahat yang ada padanya seperti senjatanya dan kelakuannya. Maka perihal itulah yang diketakuti kami jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi maklum kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi, yakni adapun dua orang Buton [19] dengan beberapa tahun lalu antaranya tinggal di Pulau Air akan nama negerinya Wajo, peri itulah Sri Sultan dari karena dia empunya lagi, tiada sekali₂ ia terjual, hanya tinggal saja. Maka peri itulah mudah-mudahan kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal [20] di Betawi hendaklah kiranya hal menyuruh supaya memberikan pada utusan itu jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi maklum kiranya Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi, adapun Paduka Sri Sultan telah adalah menyeru dengan sangat perminta{an}nya [21] barang ada satu pedang sapati³⁶ yang telah dikirimkannya pada tangan utusan itu juga, yang betul punya mata lagi, pedang yang satu itu hendak disuruhkan supaya membaiki karena sudahlah hangus, dan lagi senapang buatan orang Palembang barang sepucuk jua [22] adanya yang bagus barang tujuh jengkal. Demikianlah.

Apalah kiranya pada akhir *al-satarnya* hanya dua lapan lasykar laki-laki akan tanda alamat *al-hayat* kepada Kompeni, dan kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal sendirinya dua orang jua adanya, dan lagi pula [23] cita halus barang dua kayu tanah putih berkembang hitam, dan gunting kertas dua, dan gunting kecil dua, dan pisau peruncim kalam dua, dan mata kucing yang terang dua, dan main₂ cengki jua adanya [24].

Tersurat di atas Istana Buton di dalam Kerajaan Sri Sultan Raja Buton pada dua lapan hari bulan Rabiulawal pada hari Khamis di dalam hijrat al-Nabi *Sal-alam* seribu dua ratus tujuh pada tahun Jim³⁷.

³⁶ That is the *sapati*'s sword. *Sapati* was imperial chancellor, one post in *Sarana Wolio* (Elbert et al. 1911: 178; Van den Berg 1939: 469; P. Schoorl 2003: 82).

³⁷ 8 Rabiulawal 1207 H (*Tahun Jim*) = 24 October 1792.

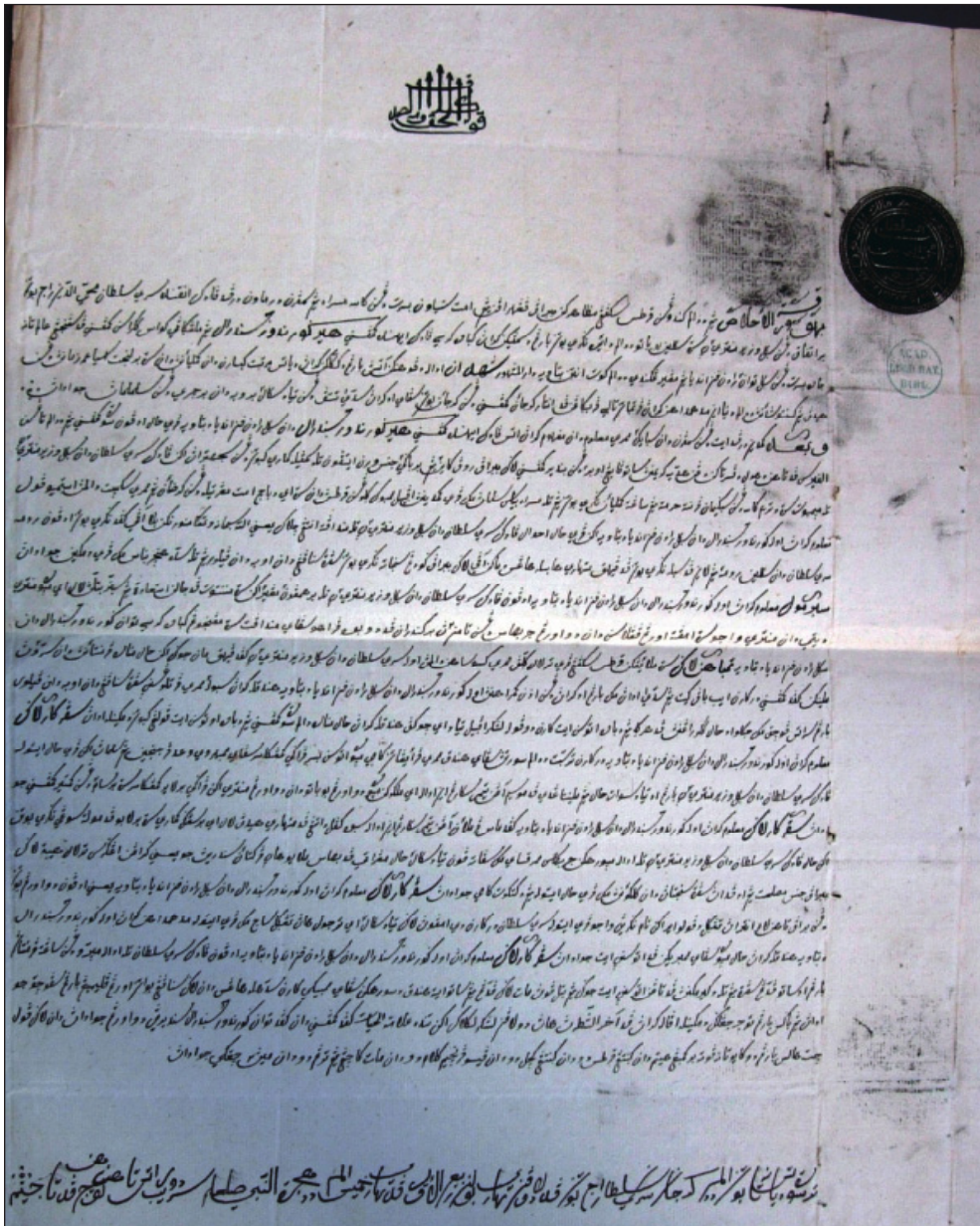


Illustration 2. Letter C: Cod. Or. 2240-Ia [24] (Courtesy Leiden University Library).

Letter D: Cod.Or.2240-Ia (38)

Qauluhu al-haqq wa-kalamuhu al-sidqi,

Bahwa ini warkat al-mahbat dipesertakan dengan tabi hormat *al-ta'zim* dan *takrim* daripada Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Muhyiuddin Raja Buton dengan segala wazir *muazzam* orang besar₂nya dan menteri₂ serta sekalian bobato, natiasa mengandung hati terang [1] benderang, barang disampaikan Allah Subhanahu

wa ta'ala datang kiranya mendapatkan bawah *qadam* kursi Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Tuan **Heer Gurnadur Jenderal** di Betawi yang memerintahkan sekalian alam Tanah Jawah dengan segala Tuan₂ Raden van India yang ada sertanya di dalam [2] <di dalam> kota Kompeni bernama Intan Betawi bandar yang *kamaliyah*.

Syahdan dikenalkan Allah di atas pangkat darjah kebesaran dan kemuliannya pada hal melakukan maksud kesukaannya *fi al-barri wa al-bahri* dan serta lanjut usia umur zamannya dengan hidup yang sempurna kebajikan dan [3] <dan> kesentosaan di dalam dunia ini, supaya ada kiranya teguh dan tetap hal pergantungan *habal wasiq* pada antara Kerajaan Kompeni dengan Kerajaan Buton boleh tinggal sedia *maujud daim* selamanya, *Amin Rabba'l Alamin* [4].

Waba'dahu kemudian daripada itu Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Buton dan segala wazir menteri₂nya akan hal menyuruh seorang anakandanya, yaitu Syahbandar di Buton, dan yang mengiringkan dia dua orang menteri dan empat orag pangalasan, dua jurubahasa [5] dan seorang na{k}hoda serta teman₂nya pada sebuah perahu. Lalu ia menyampaikan surat maklum dan mafhum ke bawah *hadirat* Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni **Heer Gurnadur Jenderal** dan segala Raden van India di Betawi perihal adapun kami telah sudah menyuruh dua orang [6] bobato dan dua orang menteri serta empat orang pangalasan dan dua orang jurubahasa kepada empat buah perahu supaya hendak pergi ke Hujung Pandan akan membaiki dan meneguhi perkataan *waad* perjanjian selamanya di dalam kontrak yang dibuat oleh Kompeni dengan [7] Tanah Buton. Maka Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni di Mangkasar telah sudah dikabulkannya akan kami, pun sekalian menerima kasih kepada Ayahandah Kompeni dengan beberapa selamat umur panjang jua adanya. Istimewa pula betapa akan hal patutnya tiada ia membaiki dan meneguhi *waad* perjanjian [8] dari karena sudahlah bersabda segala orang tua₂ kami di Buton, sudah ditalikan dipandanginya perpegangan di dalam alam dunia ini akan memandang kepada matahari dan bulan dan empat persegi dan empat penjuru alam ini tiada mendapat hal perenggangan, yang tetap hanyalah kepada [9] Kompeni tali yang amat teguh lagi tiada berubah₂. Maka inilah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan sekalian Negeri Buton sentiasa berpegang kepada Ayahandah Kompeni yang amat kuasa di Bawah Angin³⁸ dengan setepat₂nya sehingga dunia habis. Demikian jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi adapun Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi, adapun pada tahun yang lalu adalah datang Inggris dua lapan buah kapal di Muara Buton, mentanyakan Serani Walandah [11] hendak diambilnya. Maka jurubahasa kami pun menjawab padanya: "Adapun Serani Walandah telah sudah berlayar ke Mangkasar, belum datang sekarang ini". Maka berkata Inggris: "Jikalau demikian, nantilah pada bulan Zulhaji yang kemudian itu aku singgah kemari di sini nangkap Serani Walandah itu". Maka inilah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya daripada kesukarannya dan ketakutannya telah sudah kami bertanya Ayahandah Kompeni

³⁸ According to Laffan (2005), the term *Negeri Bawah Angin* was firstly recognized in Sumatra closely to the fifteenth century. Possibly it was launched in Sumatra by the Arabs and Persians after an envoy from these regions sailed for Ceylon and Malacca Strait in that century. The old Persian term for it was *Zirbat* or *Zirbadat*. Later the term *Negeri Bawah Angin* spread to other parts of the Malay world.

di Mangkasar, karena tiada sekali₂ kami mendapat tipu daya di dalam akal kami [13] hendak melawan dia, hanyalah kami hendak jua melarikan diri kami dan memberikan negeri kami daripada sangat hebatnya, tetapi utusan kami ke Mangkasar sekarang ini belum datang adanya.

Seperkara lagi Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan [14] Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi perihal sekarang ini sudah di dalam berperang dengan Negeri Wawoni antara tiga bulan. Segala raja₂ dan menteri₂ serta segala rakyat tiga ribu bilangan banyaknya yang pergi menyerang Negeri Wawoni telah banyak [15] mati dan luka, dan senjata sudah banyak yang rusak, dan obat³⁹ dan pelor sudah habis dalam perang kami. Jadilah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya dengan sebole₂ menyeru dengan sangat permintaanya yang amat kasihan hatinya di bawah kemuliaan [16] dan kemurahannya oleh Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi. Maka jikalau ada kiranya suka dan rida⁴⁰ lagi percaya kepada Negeri Buton, maka kami minta mau beli senapang barang empat ratus pucuk yang baik lagi bagus, dan obat [17] empat puluh pikul, dan timah dua puluh pikul, dan batu api barang empat ribu bilangan banyaknya. Maka akan harganya telah juga di dalam surat utusan itu, tetapi di dalam {h}ati pun permintaan kami, jikalau boleh dengan bolehnya, maka seyogianya Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Jenderal ditolong kami, jangan kiranya [18] memeri sia-siakan permintaan kami ini, karena di dalam sukar Negeri Buton. Jikalau binasa Negeri Buton, siapa lagi yang rugi dan yang bercinta melainkan Paduka Ayahandah kompeni jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya bermaklumkan [19] Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi perihal adapun Negeri Papua dan negeri Seran sudah berittifaq hendak menyerang Negeri Buton pada masa kehabisan daripada angin timur sekarang ini kehendaknya. Adapun jumlah bilangan [20] banyaknya selaksi⁴¹ dua ribu orang yang menumpang kepada tiga ratus haluan perahunya. Maka pada masa sekarang ini setengah telah sudah datang. Maka peri yang diserangnya telah sudahlah empat negeri yang bernama Mawasangka dan Wawoluw dan Lasalimu dan Ka{l}edupa serta dengan [21] perkataannya: "Dimana₂ negeri yang berpegang kepada Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni yaitulah akan hal kami hendak membinasakan dia". Dan lagi antara dua bulan ini telah sudah tiga kali yang *sadiq* kepada kami. Pertama, orang Bugis dan Orang Buton [22] yang telah ditangkapnya, maka ia lari kemari di Buton bersama₂, lalu ia membawa warta khabar kepada kami seperti demikian hal perkataannya: "Adapun orang Papua yang tiga ratus perahu dari sana tiada lagi lain perginya hendak menyerang Negeri Buton." Demikian jua adanya[23]. Dan yang kedua lagi, orang Binongko yang telah lari kemari demikian hal perkataannya: "Dimana₂ negeri yang sekarang ini yang ada berpegang kepada Kompeni Walandah yang tiada ia mengikut Inggris, maka betullah kami membinasakan dia". Dan yang ketiga, warta khabar yang datang kepada kami akan [24] suruhan kami

³⁹ Means *obat bedil* ('ammunition'). See this word in other lines of this letter.

⁴⁰ Written *radi*.

⁴¹ Spelled s-l-k-s-y (*selaksi*), apparently from cognate *selaksa* (*sepuluh ribu*, 'ten thousands').

yang membawa surat kepada Gubernur⁴² di Mangkasar suruh bawa kepada Heer di sana dari Ternate. Maka peri tat kala ia kembali utusan kami, maka bersinggah dari Banggai dan serta ia sampai dari Banggai utusan kami, maka Raja Banggai telah adalah berkirim surat [25] kepada Paduka Sri Sultan Buton dengan disuruhnya lagi utusan kami itu dengan segeranya kembali ke Buton. Demikianlah perkataannya: “Kembalilah kamu lekas berdatap kepada Paduka Sri Sultan di Buton supaya diingatnya perahu yang tiga ratus di sana. Maka tiadalah [26] lain melainkan ke Negeri Buton jua hendak diserangnya”. Maka inilah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya daripada sebab ia membayangkan hal permintaan kami ke bawah daulat kemuliaan Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni yang amat kuasa di Bawah Angin dengan [27] <dengan> seharap₂nya hal permintaan kami ini dengan harap yang sempurna telah habis dinyatakan jua adanya. Demikianlah.

Apalah kiranya yang ada pada akhir *al-satar* ini hanyalah bingkisan dua lapan orang laki-laki akan tanda alamat *al-hayat* dipesankan dengan tabi banyak₂, [28] dan lagi pula ada dua orang bodoh akan kiriman Paduka Sri Sultan sendiri datang kepada Paduka Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal sendiri jua adanya. Dan lagi adapun dipesankannya p-y-l-w-m⁴³ warna putih dan hitam barang dari cepiyau dan p-y-w-l⁴⁴ yang baik satu [29], dan minyak cengke{h}, dan pisau peruncim kalam, dan kacamata, dan t-r-w-p-w⁴⁵ dua, dan kain antelasan⁴⁶ kira₂ satu juba{h}, dan kain cinta Walandah⁴⁷ sekayu yang halus, dan sut{r}a sekayu.

Tersurat di atas Tanah Buton di dalam Kerajaan Paduka Sri Sultan di Buton pada dua lapan hari Rabiulakhir pada hari Islam di dalam hijrat al-Nabi *Sal-alam* seribu dua ratus sebelas pada tahun alif.⁴⁸

⁴² Spelled g-w-b-w-r-n-w-r (*guburnur*).

⁴³ I could not indentify this word yet. Jan van der Putten suggests that possibly the cognate of this word was *pelawan* (*p-y-l-w-n*) from the Persian language, which refers to a fine and costly silk (personal communication, 14 June 2005).

⁴⁴ I could not recognize this word yet.

⁴⁵ I could not identify this word yet. But possibly it meant *teropong* ('binocular').

⁴⁶ Spelled a-n-t-l-s-n (*antelasan*), which is a costly European made textile. It was often used to make grand long flowing robes (*jubah kebesaran*) of the higher ranking European officials prior to the twentieth century (see Wilkinson 1932, I: 493). This textile was mentioned by Abdullah bin Abdulkadir Munshi in his description about Thomas Stanford Raffles' belongings when he arrived in Singapore: “Bermula maka adalah dibawanya beberapa perkara barang-barang yang indah-indah daripada perbuatan Eropah, iaitu seperti beberapa macam berpeti-peti, dan *pistol*, dan kain antelas yang mahal harganya, dan kain khasanah bunga mas, dan lagi beberapa jenis perkakasan yang belum pernah dilihat orang, dan sakhlata yang halus-halus beberapa jenis dan horloji yang indah-indah, serta kertas membuat surat kepada raja-raja Melayu yang telah tertulis bunga mas dan perak dan lain daripada ini beberapa banyak perkakasan akan menjadi hadiah kepada raja-raja Melayu adanya” (Munshi 1907: [58]; underlined by Suryadi, spelling corrected).

⁴⁷ Likely *lakense stof* or a kind of *linen*. But Wilkinson (1932, I: 493) refers to it as *chintz*, a printed cotton and a sort of primary barter goods during the VOC era which was mostly imported from India.

⁴⁸ 28 Rabiulakhir 1211 H. (*Tahun Alif*) = 1 October 1796.

Letter E : Cod.Or. 2240-Ia (44)

Qauluhu al-haqq,

Bahwa ini warkat al-fariz serta menyatakan tabi banyak₂ akan tanda pengharapan muhibah *al-ikhlas* daripada Padua Anakanda Sri Sultan Muhyiuddin Raja Buton serta dengan segala wazir orang₂ besar dan [1] menteri₂nya, sekalian bobato, sentiasa mengandungi hati yang sebenar betulnya, datang kiranya mendapatkan ke bawah *qadam* hadirat Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal yang mempunyai kuasa [2] perintahnya pada selebar alam Tanah Jawah serta dengan segala Tuan₂ Raden van India yang ada sebicaranya di dalam kota Kompeni bernama Intan Betawi bandar yang *kamaliyah*.

Syahdan dipohonkan atas barang dianugerahi jua kiranya [3] selamat dan sejahtera kekal di atas pangkat darjah ketinggian dengan melakukan takbir perintahnya dan serta lanjut usia umur zamannya dengan hidup yang kesentosaan supaya ada kiranya berhubungan muhibah *al-rafiq* pada [4] antara saudara-bersaudara, istimewa kepada segala handai taulan yang terhal dengan kesukaannya jua adanya.

Waba'dahu kemudian dari itu maka adalah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dengan segala wazir menteri₂nya amat [5] memeri kesukaannya dalam menyuruh seorang Menteri Dete serta dua orang pangalasan dan seorang jurubahasa dengan teman₂nya berkendara pada sebuah perahu akan menyampaikan sekeping kertas ke bawah duli *hadirat* Paduka Ayahandah [6] Kompeni Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan Raden van India di Betawi supaya *makruf* dengan sempurnanya peri kesusahannya yang amat *kabir* oleh Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya pada masa sekarang Kametir Kompeni [7] kepala *waad* perdamaian selamanya yakni telah luputlah dua musim lama antaranya oleh Kompeni tiadalah ia menyuruh datang kemari di Buton seperti kebiasaannya bergenap₂ tahun adanya.

Syahdan oleh Gunardur Jenderal dan [8] segala Raden van India di Betawi, karena inilah sebabnya telah menaruhkan di dalam pikir sangkanya yang tiada sepatutnya kepada rakyat₂nya oleh Negeri Buton sekarang adalah membawa dirinya kepada orang Inggris jua adanya.

Sebermula adapun [9] Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya terlalu sangat memeri dukacita dalam *fu'ad* adanya daripada sebab menengar seperti demikian sangkanya oleh Kompeni. Tambahan lagi, orang Buton dari dahulu sampai masa sekarang tiadalah sekali₂ [10] berpaling pada tempat lain₂ melainkan kepada pihak Kompeni jua karena ibu bapa yang sedia adanya.

Seperkara lagi Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya telah adalah menyeru dengan sangat permintaanya kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal [11] dan Raden van India di Betawi, mudah-mudahan barang ada kiranya akan hal manalah pengasih dan penyayang kepada sahabatnya yang kesukaran, hendaklah kiranya menyuruh Kametir Kompeni itu datang kemari, kalau₂ ada ia hilang *waham*, dan [12] pikir oleh Kompeni lagi, itulah yang asal dan pohon. Demikianlah. Istimewa pula Negeri Buton ini telah adalah tinggal di hujung tanjung, apabila ada suatu mendatang dia seperti Kompeni empunya musuh jikalau tiada lagi memandang [13] dengan Kametir Kompeni, niscaya betapa daya dan upaya hal mengetahui

sekalian pekerjaan kami yang telah ada ia dimufakatkan dengan pekerjaan Kompeni atau seperti musuh yang boleh dapat mengira₂ akan dilawan^{<g>}⁴⁹ atau [14] tiada jua adanya.

Seperkara lagi adapun Kompeni empunya perahu seperti kapal dan selup⁵⁰ telah putuslah di dalam tiga tahun lama antaranya tiada dalam memandang barang₂ ada yang datang dari Betawi atau di Mangkasar atau [15] yang turun datang dari Ternate, satupun tiada hal memandang betapa gerangan sebabnya oleh Kompeni kalau₂ ia telah mendapat suatu mudarat yang amat *kabir*. Maka peri itulah Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya [16] amat pula memeri kesusahan serta dukacita dan warta khabar yang *mutawatir* tiada sekali₂ didengarnya. Demikianlah.

Seperkara lagi pada bulan Muharam yang lalu telah menyuruh pula utusannya ke Mangkasar seorang [17] menteri akan membawa dengan sahaya warkat supaya menunjukkan hal kesusahannya kepada Tuan Gurnadur di Mangkasar dari karena pada kedua pihak Kompeni itu sangat suatu juga adanya.

Seperkara lagi Petor Ternate [18] telah menyuruh utusannya kepada Paduka Sri Sultan di Buton akan membawa suatu surat dan suatu lagi tiada tahu akan isi dalamnya hendak meminta pertolongan supaya menyampaikan kepada Kompeni Heer Gurnadur [19] di Mangkasar. Peri itu pun Sri Sultan sudahlah menyerahkan pula pada utusannya menteri yang pergi ke Mangkasar. Demikianlah adanya.

Seperkara lagi adapun surat Kompeni yang disampaikan oleh S{y}ahbandar pada [20] tahun dahulu serta hadiah kirimannya beberapa jenis warna, keadaannya adalah Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya akan hal menyambut serta menerima kasih dengan beberapa keridaan hati yang sangat sukacita [21] dalamnya, seperti mana lagi perintah istiadat kembalinya Negeri Buton yang telah sudah diperlakukannya. Demikianlah adanya.

Seperkara lagi Sri Sultan segala wazir menteri₂nya ada suatu mudarat kesusahan: Jurutulis [22] yang menyurat kiriman pada setahun₂ adalah sakit, terlalu keras penyakitnya siang dan malam. Tetapi sekarang ini yang menyurat kiriman itulah anak₂ yang da'if lagi bebal. Jikalau ada<h> yang mendapat salah dalam [23] warkahnya ini, perkataan yang lebih atau kurang, Tuan Heer Gurnadur yang memeri maaf serta izin keridaannya. Demikianlah adanya.

Apalah kiranya tanda alamat *al-hayat* pada akhir *al-satarnya* hanya dua [24] <dua> lapan orang bingkisan kepada Kompeni dan dua orang kiriman kepada Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal. Demikianlah adanya. Dan lagi pula Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan telah berpesan [25] payu{ng} ubur₂ dan permadani, dua lagi senapan Kompeni, dan *petola* sehelai jua adanya.

Tersurat di atas Tanah Buton di dalam Kerajaan Paduka Sri Sultan pada dua puluh hari bulan Rabiulakhir pada hari Isnin di dalam hijrat al-Nabi *Sal-alam* seribu dua ratus tiga belas tahun.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Spelled d-l-w-ng.

⁵⁰ From English *sloop* (see Wilkinson 1932, II: 417; Iskandar 1984: 1224). Munshi (1907: 160) wrote: "Shahadan [!] labohan Singapura pun sesaklah dengan kapal, kechi, sloop, frigate, dan tengah tiga tiang, dan schooner pudua'an, dan senat, wangkang China dan Annam dan Siam, dan perahu Brunai dan sebagainya" (underlined by Suryadi, spelling corrected).

⁵¹ 20 Rabiulakhir 1213 H = 1 October 1798.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LETTERS

Malay court letters, such as Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters, have a relatively fixed pattern. They consist of five elements: 1) letterhead, 2) two opening paragraphs, 3) the main content, 4) the closing paragraph, and 5) the colophon. In their original Jawi manuscripts, the colophon is written separately (see Illustrations 1 and 2), whereas three other elements are often written without spaces, but each can be identified through the use of particular opening keywords that are written in bold and bigger letters (see Illustrations 1 and 2).

There are two forms of inscription of the letterhead, which are always written in bold: 1) '*Qauluhu al-haqq*' (his word is the truth) (*Letter A* and *Letter E*) and '*Qauluhu al-haqq wa-kalamuhu al-sidqi*' (his word the truth and his speech veracity) (*Letter B*, *Letter C*, and *Letter D*). Based on my reading of many Malay letters from various regions of Nusantara, including Buton, I infer that the variation of their letterhead reflects the difference of their contents. The letters with letterhead '*Qauluhu al-haqq*' usually contain statements or clarifications by the local kings addressed to their Dutch master in Batavia, the Governor General. For example, the Governor General's alleged a local king that he was not loyal anymore to his Dutch masters or, conversely, a local king reminded the Governor General about his obligation as master, such as to update the bilateral treaties or to support him with weapons because his kingdom's territory was threatened by the enemies. On the other hand, the letters with letterhead '*Qauluhu al-haqq wa-kalamuhu al-sidqi*' usually contain additional demands for various kinds of European products of luxury such as clocks, swords, binoculars, scissors, guns, the costly textiles such as velvet and silk, even the Dutch flag (Suryadi 2010b: 142-143). Letters with such letterhead usually have a persuasive tone.

Two opening paragraphs contain information about the sender of the letter, praises, prayers, and expressions of obedience to the receiver, that is, the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies in Batavia, who was called '*Ayahanda[h] Baginda*' or '*Ayahanda[h] Kompeni*'. The first paragraph usually starts with the phrase '*Bahwa ini warkat [...]*', followed by some Arabic words such as '*al-mahbat*', '*al-akram*', '*al-ikhlas*', and '*al-fariz*', while the second one starts with the word '*syahdan*'.

The main content takes the larger part of the letter in which the messages are conveyed. It often consists of a number of paragraphs, depending on the length of the letters. (In *Letter A*, for example, this part is quite short. The paragraphs of this main content usually start with the word or phrase '*Waba'dahu*', '*Sebermula*', and '*Seperkara lagi*'.

The closing paragraph contains explanation about the presents (including slaves, usually eight persons) which accompanied the letter and the gifts (the European technological products) asked for the Governor General. The closing paragraph always started with the phrase '*Apalah kiranya*'. The colophon contains information about the date and place of the letter was written, but does not inform the secretary (*jurutulis*) who wrote the letters.

LANGUAGE FEATURES

In this section, I present my preliminary analysis concerning the specific features of the language of the letters. I scrutinize some elements of these letters that intrigue me linguistically in order to understand the convention of classical Malay letter writing.

A. AFFIXES

I start with the *me-* prefix. In the letters, this prefix appears in two different allomorphs.

me[M]- allomorph

The morphophonemic *memeri* is frequently used in the letters. Below we can see some examples cited from the letters (my emphasis).

- a. Apabila ada suatu hal yang *memeri* kecederaan, janganlah kiranya hal menengar khabar pada orang lain, [...] (A.9-10);
- b. [...] dan sebaik₂ *memeri* maklum dan mafhum kiranya atas Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni [...] (C.5);
- c. Maka peri kemudiannya apabila membuka gulungan kertasnya dan serta ia di baca, amat mengertilah dengan keridaan yang *memeri* sukacita dalamnya. (C.7);
- d. [...] Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi hendaklah kiranya seboleh₂ *memeri* pertolongan seperti senapang dan bor dan pelor barang seratus pucuk. (C.13-14);
- e. [...] maklum kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal [...] di Betawi dari karena tersebut di dalam suratnya supaya hendak *memeri* peringatan [...] (C.15);
- f. [...] jangan kiranya *memeri* sia-siakan permintaan kami ini [...] (D. 18-19);
- g. [...] Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan [...] amat *memeri* kesukaannya dalam menyuruh seorang Menteri Dete serta dua orang pangalasan dan seorang jurubahasa dengan teman₂nya [...] (E.5-6);
- h. [...] Paduka Sri Sultan [...] terlalu sangat *memeri* dukacita dalam *fu'ad* adanya [...] (E.10);
- i. Maka peri itulah Sri Sultan [...] amat pula *memeri* kesusahan serta dukacita [...] (E.16-17);
- j. Jikalau ada<h> yang mendapat salah dalam warkahnya ini perkataan yang lebih atau kurang, Tuan Heer Gurnadur yang *memeri* maaf serta izin keridaannya [...] (E. 23-24).

In modern Malay and Indonesian, the verb *memeri* is rarely used. But in the same letters, we found the verbs *memberi* and *memberikan*. See quotes below.

- a. [...] pergi ke Hujung Pandan pada tahun yang lalu hendak *memberi* maklum kepada Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni di Mangkasar. [...] (B.12);
- b. Maka peri itulah mudah-mudahan kiranya oleh Gurnadur Jenderal di Betawi hendaklah kiranya hal menyuruh supaya *memberikan* pada utusannya itu jua adanya [...] (C.20-21);
- c. Maka jikalau kamu tiada *memberikan* Paduka niscaya ganaskan negeri kamu. (D.13);

- d. [...] kami hendak jua melarikan diri kami dan *memberikan* negeri kami [...] (D.14).

Some scholars with whom I discussed this matter suggest that the stem of *memeri* is *peri* (to describe), not *beri* (to give). If its stem/root word is *peri*, it seems that its meaning is rather pejoratively simply 'to describe' in modern Malay and Indonesian. But Muhadjir (2005) suggests that its stem is *beri*. He came to this conclusion after observing the use of the verb *memeri* in the context of the sentences of the letters. Furthermore, he mentions that the verb *memeri* is rather deviated from the Standard Malay Dialect (Muhadjir 2005: 6). However, I found that this verb was rarely used in classical Malay texts written in Riau and the Malay Peninsula. According to Ab Razak Ab Karim (1994), the verb *memeri* was largely used in the earlier Malay manuscripts, especially from Aceh, but its use decreased in those manuscripts written in the nineteenth century and onwards. In Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters, the verb *memeri* was extensively used. Muhadjir mentions that the verb *memeri* was used around 70 times in the Butonese classical text *Istiadat Tanah Negeri Buton* (see its transliteration by Achadiati Ikram 2005), whereas *memberi* was used just once (Muhadjir 2005).

The text of Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters also provides us with the use of allomorph *me[M]* with or without suffix *-kan* or *-i*, such as *membeli(kan)*, *memberitahu*, *membuka*, *membawa*, *membinasakan*, *membayangkan*, and *mempunyai* (my emphasis).

me[N]- allomorph

In the letters, we found the verbs *mendapat(kan)* (A.3; B.2,9,15,17; C.8,11; D.2,9,13; E.2,26,23) and *mendatang* (E.13). There is also *menzahirkan* form (C.1). Interestingly, we found *mentanyakan* instead of *menanyakan* as can be suggested from the following quote.

- a. [...] adapun pada tahun yang lalu adalah datang Inggris dua lapan buah kapal di Muara Buton, *mentanyakan* Serani Walandah hendak diambilnya. (D.10-11).

We also found *menengar* instead of *mendengar*, as can be seen in the following quotes.

- a. Apabila ada suatu hal yang *memeri* kecederaan, janganlah kiranya hal *menengar* khabar pada orang lain, [...] (A.9-10);
- b. Maka Paduka Sri Sultan serta *menengar* demikian perkataan Lutenan itu, lalu diberikannya satu sekoci jua adanya. (B.21);
- c. [...] Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya terlalu sangat *memeri* dukacita dalam fu'ad adanya daripada sebab *menengar* seperti demikian sangkanya oleh Kompeni. (E.10).

The *menengar* form is also profoundly used in Classical Malay texts from

Riau and the Malay Peninsula. We also found the distinctive combination of *me[M/N]-* prefix with *-i* suffix, as can be suggested from *membaiki*, *membaharui*, *meneguhi*, and *menetapi* instead of *memperbaiki*, *memperbaharui*, *memperteguh*, and *menetapkan*, which suggests that the eighteenth century Malay did not yet produce the combined prefix *memper-*. See the quotes from the letters below.

- a. [...] enam buah perahu pergi di Mangkasar akan *membaiki* dan *menetapi* bunyi waad perjanjian yang lama [...] (B.7);
- b. [...] kami menyuruh utusan besar pergi ke Mangkasar supaya *membaharui* waad perjanjian yang selamanya. (C.15);
- c. [...] hendak pergi ke Hujung Pandan akan *membaiki* dan *meneguhi* perkataan waad perjanjian selamanya di dalam kontrak yang dibuat oleh Kompeni dengan Tanah Buton. (D.7-8).

ber- prefix

We found *bersinggah* to be an intransitive verb that is rarely used in current Malay and Indonesian. See the following example.

- a. [...] kepada masa permulaan angin timur sekarang ini adalah sebuah kapan datang pada matahari hidup, lalu ia *bersinggah* kemari serta berlabu{h} pada mulut sungai negeri Buton, [...] (C.17).

Muhadjir (2005) also found *berkikir*, *bertakut*, and *bermasak* intransitive verbs in the Butonese text *Istiadat Negeri Buton* (see Ikram 2005), which is also rarely used in modern Malay and Indonesian.

In five the letters transliterated above, we also found the words *bermaklumkan* and *memaklumkan*. The former, which has seemingly been archaic in modern Malay and Indonesian, is more frequently used than the latter. See the quotes below.

- a. **Seperkara lagi** Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* Paduka Yang Dipertuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan hal perperangan kami dengan Negeri Kalincusu sekarang ini. (B.9-10)
- b. **Seperkara lagi** Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi pada hal segala meriam₂ yang dimintanya oleh Kompeni pada tiap₂ tahun di Negeri Buton adanya. (B.13-14);
- c. **Seperkara lagi** Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* Paduka Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan hal sebuah lagi kici datang dari Serubaya [Surabaya; Suryadi] supaya hendak pergi ke Bandan. (B.21-22);
- d. **Seperkara lagi** Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi akan hal bendera Kompeni yang telah sudah dikirimkan dahulu itu sudahlah ia buruk, [...] (B.25-26);
- e. **Seperkara lagi** adapun Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Heer Gurnadur

- Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi, adapun pada tahun yang lalu adalah datang Inggris dua lapan buah kapal di Muara Buton, [...] (D.11);
- f. **Seperkara lagi** Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi perihal sekarang ini sudah di dalam berperang dengan Negeri Wawoni antara tiga bulan. (D.14-15);
 - g. **lagi** Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya *bermaklumkan* Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi perihal adapun Negeri Papua dan negeri Seran sudah berittifaq hendak menyerang Negeri Buton [...] (D.19-20).

The verb *memaklumkan*, on the other hand, is found twice in letter B:

- a. **Seperkara lagi** Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya *memaklumkan* Paduka Ayahanda Kompeni pada hal kami mendapat orang jauh dua orang yang ditangkap oleh orang Seran. (B.17);
- b. **Seperkara lagi** Paduka Sri Sultan dan segala wazir menteri₂nya akan hal *memaklumkan* Paduka Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala Raden van India di Betawi dari hal ada sebuah kici Kompeni empunya perahu datang di Ternate [...] (B.18).

di- prefix

We also found verbs with *di-* prefix and *-i* or *-kan* suffix, such as *diketakuti*, *ditalikan*, and *dimintakan(nya)*. See the quotes below.

- a. Maka perihal itulah yang *diketakuti* kami jua adanya. (C.19);
- b. [...] karena sudahlah bersabda segala orang tua₂ kami di Buton, sudah *ditalikan* dan dipandang⁵²nya perpegangan⁵² di dalam alam dunia ini akan memandang kepada matahari dan bulan dan [...] empat penjuru alam ini tiada mendapat hal perenggangan yang tetap hanyalah kepada Kompeni tali yang amat teguh lagi tiada berubah₂. (D.9-10)
- c. Inilah Paduka Sri Sultan [...] serta dilihatnya dalam surat Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni sudah ittifaqlah sekaliannya *dimintakannya* harga segala meriam₂ ini. (B.14).

B. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SENTENCES

Generally speaking, the sentences of the letters are relatively long with some prepositions included. As can be suggested from the transliteration above, the new sentences are usually marked by some particular words such as *maka*, *adapun*, *tambahan lagi*, and *demikianlah*. Likewise, the word *syahdan* is also often used to start a new paragraph. Some other words used to start a paragraph are *bahwa*, *waba'dahu*, *sebermula*, and *seperkara lagi*. However, the words used to start the paragraphs in Malay letters show variation from one region to another.

The structure of the sentences is quite distinctive, not only due to specific affixations of the verbs, but also due to the use of particular prepositions,

⁵² The verb *perpegangan* form is also odd, likewise *pertambahan* form (C.4).

such as the combination of *pada* and *hal*, which means ‘concerning’ or ‘in the matter of’, which is equivalent with *tentang* or *mengenai* in modern Malay or Indonesian. It is not the conjunction *padahal* (‘whereas’). However, I did not find this form yet in any other Malay texts, especially those from the western part of the Malay world. See the following quotes.

- a. [...] adalah Paduka Sri Sultan [...] peri menyuruhkan Alperes Ahmad [...] menumpang pada dua buah perahu padewakang akan menyampaikan nabazah serta supaya maklum dan mafhum kiranya Paduka Dipertuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal [...] di Betawi *pada hal* menyuruh utusannya yaitu Syahbandar Raja Kamilanta [...] pada enam buah perahu pergi di Mangkasar [...] (B.5-7);
- b. [...] Paduka Sri Sultan [...] bermaklumkan Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal [...] di Betawi *pada hal* segala meriam₂ yang dimintanya oleh Kompeni pada tiap₂ tahun di Negeri Buton adanya. (B.13-14);
- c. Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya memaklumkan Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni *pada hal* kami mendapat orang jauh dua orang yang ditangkap oleh orang-orang Seran. (B.17);
- d. Syahdan dikekalkan Allah di atas pangkat *darjah* kebesaran dan kemuliaannya *pada hal* melakukan maksud kesukaannya *fi al-barri wa al-bahri* dan serta lanjut usia umur zamannya dengan hidup yang sempurna kabajikan dan <dan> kesentosaan di dalam dunia ini [...] (D.3-4).

We can compare this form with *akan hal* that has the same meaning, which is also found in the letters, as can be seen in the following quotes.

- a. [...] Kemudian daripada itu adalah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Raja Buton *akan hal* menunjukkan selamat al-mubarak akan tanda berkasih-kasihan [...] kepada Paduka Ayahandah Tuan Heer Gurnadur [...] (A.6-7);
- b. Paduka Sri Sultan [...] bermaklumkan Paduka Yang Dipertuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal [...] *akan hal* peperangan kami dengan Negeri Kalincusu sekarang ini. (B.9-10);
- c. Paduka Sri Sultan [...] *akan hal* memaklumkan Paduka Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal [...] dari hal ada sebuah kici Kompeni empunya perahu datang di Ternate yaitu nama Lutenan Peter H-k-P-r-y-t-r-k-s [...] (B.19-20);
- d. Paduka Sri Sultan [...] bermaklumkan Paduka Tuan Heer Gunardur Jenderal [...] *akan hal* sebuah lagi kici datang dari Serubaya [...] (B.22);
- e. [...] Sri Sultan [...] bermaklumkan kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal [...] *akan hal* bendera Kompeni yang telah sudah dikirimkan dahulu itu sudahlah ia buruk [...] (B.25-26);
- f. *Akan hal* Paduka Sri Sultan [...] telah adalah menyuruhkan jurubahasa memeriksai [...] (C.18);
- g. [...] Kemudian dari itu adalah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Buton [...] *akan hal* menyuruh seorang anakandanya, yaitu Syahbandar di Buton, dan yang mengiringkan dia dua orang menteri [...] pada sebuah perahu. (D.5-6);
- h. “Dimana₂ negeri yang berpegang kepada Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni yaitulah *akan hal* kami hendak membinasakan dia”. (D.22);
- i. Sri Sultan [...] telah adalah menyeru dengan sangat permintaannya kepada Tuan Gurnadur Jenderal [...], mudah-mudahan barang ada kiranya *akan hal*

manalah pengasih dan penyayang kepada sahabatnya yang kesukaran [...] (E.11-12);

- j. [...] adapun surat Kompeni yang disampaikan oleh S{y}ahbandar pada tahun dahulu serta hadiah kirimannya [...], adalah Sri Sultan *akan hal* menyambut serta menerima kasih dengan bebrapa keridaan hati yang sangat sukacita dalamnya [...] (E.20-22).

C. PARALLELISM

In the letters, we found two synonym nouns used side by side in the sentences. There are three types of this form: 1) combination of Arabic and Malay words, 2) combination of Malay and Arabic words, and 3) combination of Malay and (Arabic loaned) Malay words. See the quotes below (the Arabic loanwords are written in italics).

- 1) Arabic-Malay: "*waad* perjanjian", "*kharij* keluar", and "*Waba'dahu* kemudian dari[pada] itu". See the following examples (my emphasis).
 - a. [...] melainkan sebole_h₂ memegang *waad* perjanjian yang telah sudah biasa diperlakukan segala orang tua_h₂ Kompeni dengan Buton [...] (A.10-11);
 - b. [...] enam buah perahu pergi di Mangkasar akan membaiki dan menetapi bunyi *waad* perjanjian yang lama daripada zaman yang dahulu sampai sekarang dimuliakan kepada dua pihak kita [...] (B.7-8);
 - c. [...] kami menyuruh utusan besar pergi ke Mangkasar supaya membaharui *waad* perjanjian yang selamanya [...] (C.15);
 - d. [...]empat buah perahu supaya hendak pergi ke Hujung Pandan akan membaiki dan meneguhi perkataan *waad* perjanjian selamanya di dalam kontrak yang dibuat oleh Kompeni dengan Tanah Buton. (D.7-8);
 - e. Istimewa pula betapa akan hal patutnya tiada ia membaiki dan meneguhi *waad* perjanjian dari karena sudahlah bersabda segala orang tua₂ kami di Buton [...] (D.8);
 - f. Syahdan, yang telah beroleh limpah pertolongan Kompeni tatkala ia *kharij* keluar di Negeri Walandah [...] (B.3-4);
 - g. *Waba'dahu* kemudian daripada itu adalah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Raja Buton akan hal menunjukkan selamat *al-mubarak* akan tanda berkasih-kasihan dan berharap-harapan kepada Paduka Ayahandah **Tuan Heer Gurnadur**. (A.6-7);
 - h. *Waba'dahu* kemudian daripada itu adalah Paduka Sri Sultan dan wazir menteri₂nya peri menyuruhkan Alperes Ahmad dan seorang juru bahasa Inci Ali namanya serta teman₂nya, [...] (B.5);
 - i. *Waba'dahu* kemudian daripada itu dengan sempurna dan sebaik₂ memberi maklum dan mafhum kiranya atas Paduka Ayahandah Kompeni **Heer Gurnadur Jenderal** dan segala Raden van India di Betawi [...] (C.5);
 - j. *Waba'dahu* kemudian dari itu Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan Buton dan segala wazir menteri₂nya akan hal menyuruh seorang anakandanya, yaitu Syahbandar di Buton, [...] (D.5);
 - k. *Waba'dahu* kemudian dari itu maka adalah Paduka Anakanda Sri Sultan dengan segala wazir menteri₂nya amat [5] memeri kesukaannya dalam menyuruh seorang Menteri Dete serta dua orang pangalasan dan seorang jurubahasa dengan teman₂nya [...] (E.5-6).

2) Malay-Arabic: "akhir *al-satar*(nya)". See quotes below.

- a. Suatu pun tiada tanda alamat *al-hayat* daripada akhir *al-satarnya* hanya seorang buda{k} laki-laki akan dipesertakan dengan tabi banyak₂ [...] (A.12-13);
- b. Apalah kiranya pada akhir *al-satar* hanya dua lapan orang lasykar [...] (B.28);
- c. Apalah kiranya pada akhir *al-satarnya* hanya dua lapan lasykar laki-laki akan tandah alamat *al-hayat* kepada Kompeni [...] (C.23);
- d. Apalah kiranya yang ada pada akhir *al-satar* ini hanyalah bingkisan dua lapan orang laki-laki akan tanda alamat *al-hayat* dipesankan dengan tabi banyak₂ [...] (D.28);
- e. Apalah kiranya tanda alamat *al-hayat* pada akhir *al-satarnya* hanya dua <dua> lapan orang bingkisan kepada Kompeni dan dua orang kiriman kepda Tuan Heer Gurnadur Jenderal [...] (E.24-25).

3) Malay-(Arabic loaned) Malay words: "warta khabar" and "pangkat darjah". See the following quotes.

- a. Dan lagi antara dua bulan ini telah sudah tiga kali yang membawa warta khabar yang sadiq kepada kami. (D.22);
- b. [...] lalu ia membawa warta khabar kepada kami seperti demikian hal perkataannya: [...] (D.23);
- c. Dan yang ketiga, warta khabar yang datang kepada kami akan suruhan kami yang membawa surat kepada Gubernur di Mangkasar suruh bawa kepada Heer di sana dari Ternate. (D.24-25);
- d. Maka peri itulah Sri Sultan [...] amat pula memori kesusahan serta dukacita dan warta khabar yang *mutawatir* tiada sekali₂ didengarnya [...] (E.16-17);
- e. *Syahdan* dikekalkan Allah di atas pangkat darjah kebesaran dan kemuliaannya [...] (D.3);
- f. *Syahdan* dipohonkan atasnya barang dianugerahi jua kiranya selamat dan sejahtera kekal di atas pangkat darjah ketinggian dengan melakukan tadbir perintahnya [...] (E.3-4).

Parallelism is one of the main characteristics of oral narratives. I surmise that the use of parallelism in the letters denotes the influence of orality in such letter-writing tradition. Lexical or semantic parallelism is one of the main characteristics of oral narrative texts that exist in many oral traditional genres in Indonesia (see Fox 1971; Van Engelenhoven 2010). Such oral character was incorporated in written texts following the emergence of print literacy in the Archipelago in the second half of nineteenth century. Some studies have shown the influence of orality in Malay literacy (Sweeney 1987; Teeuw 1994; Sunarti 2013). The writings in Indonesia and the Malay world are full of formulaic expressions conveyed from their oral traditions.

D. THE LOANWORDS FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGES

There are many Arabic words found in Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters, such as *al-akram*, *al-fariz*, *al-hayat*, *al-ikhlas*, *al-mahbat* (cognate: *al-muhabbah*), *al-majid*, *al-mubarak*, *al-rafiq*, *al-satar*, *al-takrim*, *al-ta'zim*, *balad*, *daim*, *darul masyhur*, *fi al-*

barri wa al-bahri, fu'ad, habal-wasiq, hadirat, ittifaq, kabir, kamaliyah, kamil, kharij, makruf, masyik, maujud, maslahat, min-arrafiq, muazzam, munfasal, munkotiq, mutaawalin, mutaakhirin, mutaqaddimin, mutawatir, nabazah (cognate: *nubdzah*), *qadam sadiq, tadbir, tagayyur, takrim, waad, waba'dahu, waham, and wahid*. This fact suggests the deep influence of the Arabic in the classical Malay which, according to some studies, came directly from Arabic or Persian connection (Jones 1978; Beg 1979; Kasimin 1987; Campbell 1996; Versteegh 2003; Van Dam 2010). And in the case of Buton, this can be understood because Islam, as I have mentioned, had a strong influence in the Sultanate of Buton, not only among the nobilities but also among the commoners. It could be suggested that the *jurutulis* in the court of Buton were selected figures who had expertise on Islam and the Arabic language.⁵³

Furthermore, the letters also show the influence of other foreign languages other than Arabic. We found the vocabularies of some Western languages, as result of the trade and cultural contact with Portuguese, Dutch, and British (see Hoesin 1926). There are for example, *alperes* (from Portuguese *alferes*; but its cognate was the Arabic *al-faris*), *petor* (from Dutch *fetor*) *kametir* (from Dutch *gecommitteerde*), *estirman* (from Dutch *stuurman*), *astaraq* (from Dutch *straat*), and *selup* (from English *sloop*). On the other hand, the word *baboto* (literally 'manager') used in the Sultanate of Buton's administration system was apparently adopted from the Tidore language *fato*, which means 'to organize' (see Van Staden 2000: 530, 533).

E. WORDS WITH ADDITIONAL -H

There are some particular words written with an additional phoneme /h/ in their last syllables, such as *tuah* instead of *tua*, *istanah* instead of *istana*, *ayahandah* instead of *ayahanda*, *Jawah* instead of *Jawa*, *kasih mesrah* instead of *kasih mesra*, and *Negeri Walandah* instead of *Negeri Walanda* [the Netherlands]. Such additional -h is also found in Bimanese manuscripts (Chambert-Loir 2004; Suryadi 2010b). According to Chambert-Loir (2004: 37), it has no phonetic significance. Meanwhile, the words *sudah* and *sedia* were often written by adding *tashdid* above phoneme /d/, so each should be pronounced *suddah* and *seddia*. In the same way, *khavar* should be read *khavbar* due to the *tashdid* that was put above phoneme /b/.⁵⁴

⁵³ The local kindoms had several *jurutulis* (or *juru tulis*) and in some of such kingdoms situated in eastrern Indonesia, the *jurutulis pribadi* (personal scribe) of the king was called the *sekretaris* (Widjojo 2009: 48). We do not know much about these local scribes who worked in the courts of local kingdoms across the Archipelago since there have not been extensive studies about them.

⁵⁴ The *tashdid* sign in the classical Malay texts has two functions: to mark double phonemes such as the one shown above (*suddah, seddia, khavbar*), and to mark schwa or the mid-central vowel [ə] as could be seen in the writing of the words *telah* and *tetapi* used in Sultan Muhyiuddin's letters. On the functions of *tashdid* in the Malay classical texts, see for example Jones 2005.

EPILOGUE

At first glance, there seems to be no specific characteristics of the classical Malay letters from Buton. In 1812 William Marsden mentioned that there was uniformity in the letter-writing tradition throughout the Malay world (Marsden 1982, II: iii), while Gallop (1994: 13) states that many Malay letters show an “image of a common underlying structure transcending regional boundaries but deriving from Perso-Arabic roots”.

Nevertheless, as I have shown, Sultan Muhyiuddin’s letters, just like their counterparts from other regions of the Archipelago, have specific diction and features that show local influences. They show distinctiveness in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax. Such variations were possibly an effect of the character and nature of the *Jawi* script, which was adaptive to any variant of Malay across the Archipelago, and also possibly because there was no standard spelling system for Malay writing at that time. Very flexible in character, the *Jawi* script could easily adapt to any local languages that existed in the entire Archipelago. Thus, it is reasonable why there were many different forms in terms of affixation found in the classical Malay texts before 1900. This fact also suggests that the variations of Malay had existed a long time before the European schoolmasters – British in the Malay Peninsula and Dutch in the Dutch East Indies – designed a spelling system for this language in the interest of colonialism.⁵⁵

Reading the transliteration of Sultan Muhyiuddin’s letters presented above, one gets the impression that Malay in the eighteenth century was in the process of enhancing its grammar and vocabulary: the different speakers and writers from the different local language speaking communities in the entire Archipelago had certainly contributed to improving the Malay language, their lingua franca. Now, the twentieth century Malay people are able to see which aspects of such eighteenth century Malay grammar and vocabulary had disappeared in the course of time and which ones have continued to survive in the present.

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⁵⁵ Just within the nineteenth century, the Dutch scholars intervened profoundly in the standardization of the Malay language. During the colonial times, there were two different spelling systems of the Malay language, compiled by two schoolmasters: by the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia) and by the British in the Straits Settlements (present-day Malaysia and Singapore) (see Vikør 1988). On the Dutch scholars’ intervention on standardizing the Malay language until the early twentieth century, see Hoofman (1979).

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